

REMARKS

Status of Claims

Claims 19, 20, 22-31, 37-40, 42 and 45-48 are pending in this application.

The sole rejection of these pending claims is an obviousness rejection based on U.S. patent no. 6,143,073 to Christman et al. (hereinafter "Christman").

Priority Claim

Applicant hereby perfects its priority claim to the prior-filed Germany application by filing a certified copy of the Germany application, as well as a certified translation of the document from German into English.

It is believed that the specification of the current application contains essentially the same content as that of the specification of the certified translation, and that the prior application therefore satisfies the enablement and written description requirements of 35 U.S.C. section 112, first paragraph for the currently pending claims. The present application claims priority to an earlier-filed Germany application, DE 10 33 632.9, which was filed on July 11, 2000.

The Christman Reference

The Christman patent was filed on November 19, 1998, and was published and issued on November 7, 2000.

The Christman patent is not prior art to the present application under section 102(a), because the priority application was filed on July 11, 2000, which was before the Christman patent published in November 2000.

The Christman patent also is not prior art to the present application under section 102(e), for the reasons set out in Applicant's amendment of March 12, 2007.

Accordingly, under 35 U.S.C. section 103(c), an obviousness rejection in the present application cannot be based on the Christman patent, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully solicited.

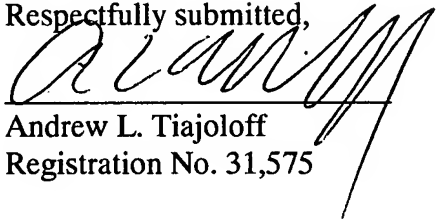
All objections of the Examiner having been addressed, and the prior art of the rejections having been excluded, formal allowance is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise, the Patent Office is invited to telephone attorney for applicants at 212-490-3285.

Tiajolloff & Kelly
Chrysler Building, 37th floor
405 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10174

tel. 212-490-3285
fax 212-490-3295

Respectfully submitted,


Andrew L. Tiajolloff
Registration No. 31,575